

# THE JAR OF DREAMS

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LILLA CABOT PERRY

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LILLA CABOT PERRY

*O.P. sent to R.R.L.*

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**THE JAR OF DREAMS**





# THE JAR OF DREAMS

A BOOK OF POEMS

BY

LILLA CABOT PERRY

AUTHOR OF "THE HEART OF THE WEED,"  
"THE GARDEN OF HELLAS," ETC.



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
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TO THE MEMORY OF  
HOWARD GARDINER CUSHING

Τοὔτό τοι ἡμετέρης μνημήϊον, ἐσθλὲ Σαβῖνε,  
ἢ λίθος ἢ μικρὴ τῆς μεγάλης φιλίας·  
Αἰεὶ ζήτήσω σέ· σὺ δ' εἰ θέμις ἐν φθιμένοισιν,  
τοῦ Δήθης ἐπ' ἐμοὶ μή τι πῖψς ὕδατος.

ANTH. PAL., *Book VII, Epigram 346.*





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## THE JAR OF DREAMS





## THE JAR OF DREAMS <sup>1</sup>

O PRECIOUS Jar of Dreams! I held you fast  
When childish arms could scarce your form  
    enfold;

Tiptoe I stood, peering for fairy gold  
In your blue depths, mysterious and vast,  
Where shapes of unimagined beauty passed  
Before my wondering gaze, and there unrolled  
A bright, bewildering future, half foretold,  
Of glorious triumph to be won at last.

Now drooping o'er the Jar of Dreams I bend;  
My burning cheek half-veiled by falling hair,  
That mercifully hides slow-dropping tears,  
While my lips smile, and shall smile to the end.  
Some fragrance of dead roses lingers there,  
Some memories, great love, and ah, some fears!

<sup>1</sup> Suggested by a picture of F. A. Bosley's.

## THE PAST THAT NEVER DIES

THE past that never dies  
Swept down upon me as I sat with you  
In the birch grove;  
Noting with dazzled eyes  
The rose and gold of sunshine, and the blue  
Of shadows flickering from the summer skies  
Upon the upturned surface of the leaves.  
A dream of love,  
Half real and half a dream,  
Wherein I floated, as the tiny flies  
Above me floated in a broad sunbeam.

The past that never dies  
Swept down upon me. — More I felt than  
knew, —  
In the deep waters of oblivion  
Which we call birth,  
If I looked long enough I should find you,  
The one, the only one,  
Who shared my life before upon this earth.

*THE PAST THAT NEVER DIES*

From those mysterious deeps,  
Half-imaged, half-obsured,  
In which all being sleeps,  
You would gaze back at me and say the word  
That you forgot to say,  
When under Persian skies you stirred  
My heart, two thousand years ago to-day.

## A FIRST LOVE

### I

I NEVER wished to love you but love came  
Unheralded, unrecognized. I knew  
That the long day was empty without you,  
And all the empty day echoed your name;  
But I was young and thought love was a flame,  
I saw it not in common sun and dew  
And throbbing silences. Your words were few  
And difficult, on me you made no claim.

And yet I felt that none could be so cold  
As you then seemed; that your impassiveness  
Was but a cloak to hide past wretchedness,  
As the gray ashes hidden fire enfold,  
Or rocks that once were molten, diamonds hold;  
I could not bear to know you comfortless!

## A FIRST LOVE

### II

I MUSED on all you had said the day before,  
Your thought so strangely different from my  
own

Plumbed my unconscious heart, as does a stone  
Flung by some careless hand from the near  
shore

In ever widening circles more and more  
Stir all the quiet pool wherein 't is thrown.  
Thus were you with me when I was alone,  
No longer could I hidden depths ignore.

I sought to answer you, yet felt how vain  
And childish was my striving, since through  
pain,

Sin, and repentance, you had greatly won  
The sweep of a horizon wider far  
Than my walled garden. Now though you are  
gone,

Through tears I see you have left the door ajar.

## IT IS SO LONG

It is so long since you were here!

The days drag out their weary length,  
With books I strive my heart to cheer,  
And from the immortals gather strength;  
Yet 'twixt me and the printed page  
Crowd memories of the insistent past,  
Shakespeare himself cannot engage,  
Whom thoughts of you have overcast.

As sweep the clouds across the sky  
Like swift wild birds hiding the blue  
Till it grows dim, I scarce know why,  
So sweep my thoughts to you, to you,  
Like swift wild birds in eager flight,  
Uncaged, they leave my empty heart,  
Their shadow turns my day to night,  
And yet in you I have no part.

Come once again and set me free,  
You gone, the whole world counts as naught,



*IT IS SO LONG*

Its beauty I've no eyes to see,  
As in a cobweb I am caught.  
Your hand can brush it all away,  
Your hand that not to me belongs,  
Yet all my night is turned to day,  
If you but listen to my songs.

## GREEN APPLES

HE that is wise will wait until October

When crowding large green apples bend the  
bough

And gather them in baskets carefully.

But we, the foolish ones, would pluck them  
now

While summer fills us with a happy courage

And all her fragrance trembles in the air,

Tuning our hearts to her gay purposes

Her joyful warmth greeting us everywhere.

So through the orchard as we idly saunter,

Where small green apples show a touch of red,

From the tough bough we wrench them off  
triumphant,

And will not wait for the ripe fruit instead.

We want them now, we like the crackling tart-  
ness,

As we bite into them with strong young teeth,

We want to eat them while we are together!

Blue skies above us and long grass beneath.

## AN AUGUST DAY

THIS is a good day to do nothing in,  
A day for silence and a day for song,  
To lie beside the stream and watch the long  
Shadows of reeds, that seem to sink therein.  
This is a day to watch the rosy haze  
That half defeats the blue of summer's sky,  
And trace the mystery of boughs, that high  
Above me spread a baffling, beauteous maze.

This is a day when bees are lazy grown,  
And in the flower-cups half-drowsy linger,  
Watching the butterflies drift brightly past.  
This is a day that I would make my own,  
And on my fancy drift, an idle singer,  
Who nothing takes, and nothing leaves at last.

## “WHOM THE GODS LOVE”

SHE watched the wind sweep through the grasses  
mellow,

She gazed o’er the broad plain and found it  
fair,

Her soul rejoiced and sang seeing the kingcup’s  
yellow

Without a care!

“Beautiful Earth!” she cried, “O beautiful  
Earth, I love you!

O bees and flowers and singing birds, some  
part

I have in you and the deep blue skies above you,  
You have my heart.

When I go hence, too soon, will you sometime  
remember

How I for very joy have kissed your ground  
Whence the flowers sprang? Or in snow of bleak  
December

Pure beauty found?

*WHOM THE GODS LOVE*

Have I loved you too much, fair World, that I  
to-morrow

Must leave you ere another spring has birth?"

"Yes! Go, dear happy child, ere you have  
known my sorrow!"

"O Mother Earth, O Mother Earth!"

## A SECRET UNTOLD

TELL me your secret, you, the lily-throated,  
Tell me your secret now!  
Before they, weeping, laid you down in silence,  
What thoughts made wan that brow,  
And shadowed those hid violets fringed in darkness,  
Which greet the sun no more?  
I waited for the time that you should tell me,  
My faith in you secure.  
I poured my heart out, wishing you should know  
me,  
Each weakness of my soul.  
I thought, to-morrow she will surely tell me,  
Making our friendship whole.  
Tell me your secret, O my well-beloved,  
Tell me your secret now!



## ALONE

I MUST bury my dead alone, my heart's best  
dead,

Above them raise no stone at foot or head;

In my heart they shall find their rest, those few  
short hours,

Not blossoms dried and pressed, but living  
flowers.

I must bury my dead alone, for none shall guess,  
Or hear in my laugh a tone that hints distress;

I silently met defeat without a tear,

My smiles were their winding-sheet, my love  
their bier.

I will visit their grave alone and count them  
o'er,

A word, a look, a tone — why ask for more?

The world would beguile my heart, but in its  
tower

My soul shall 'dwell apart — I have had my  
hour.

## A QUESTION

THROUGH the leaves the golden quivers of the  
    sunlight on the grass,  
The low whispers of the rivers over lily-pads that  
    pass,  
Songs that wait to find a singer, loves that wait  
    to find a heart,  
Broken lives that yet must linger, striving still  
    to play their part.  
Babes forlorn, without a mother, lonely, trem-  
    bling in the night,  
Men foresworn that rob another coldly of his  
    heart's delight,  
Solemn night with stars cold shining on the  
    freshly upturned sod,  
This, our world, is past divining, still we ques-  
    tion: *what is God?*

## SACRIFICE

DEAR LORD, I stretched my hands to Thee and  
prayed

That Thou would'st give me strength to do this  
thing.

“O God,” I cried, “this sacrifice I bring,  
Submissive to Thy will, and, though dismayed,  
Yet unreluctant, hoping by Thine aid  
To do that which my very soul shall wring,  
Yet free it from the deeper suffering  
Of knowing that I have Thy trust betrayed.”

Now it is done. Upon Thine altar, Thou  
Mad'st strong my hand to slay my joy unjust,  
That like an infant met me with a smile,  
Then wept and strove my pity to beguile. —  
Cover its face! Deep bury in the dust!  
But in that grave my heart is buried now.

## MEMORY THE DESTROYER

"THIS is the end and we shall meet no more,  
No more on earth," we said: "Now all is well!"  
Heedless of tears from tired eyes that fell,  
Ourselves, we closed the door.

We said, with bitter smiles: "Now it is done!"  
We closed the door and went our different ways,  
We bravely strove, but ah! while memory stays,  
Our task is scarce begun!

## A MOOD

### I

FROM the safe circle of the household light,  
Good books and talk, my soft accustomed seat,  
A sudden voice has called my wayward feet  
To wander forth along the pathway, white  
Beneath the moon; then taking my swift flight  
Across warm bracken and the briars sweet,  
Like a wild woodland thing, impetuous, fleet,  
I sought the forest shades remote from sight.

“To be alone, alone!” my spirit cried,  
“In the night’s beauty I must claim my part  
In healing silence, no one by my side,  
And one, one only, safe within my heart!”  
The moon shone darkly through the pines o’er-  
head,  
And I rejoiced to know that you were dead.

## A MOOD

### II

YES! I rejoiced to know that you were dead,  
And that the ache of life my heart alone  
Might bear, my famished heart, that gave a  
stone,

All it could give, when you were starved for  
bread.

Now death has freed you, and no tears I shed —  
Your strange wild spirit that this world had  
known

But as a cage, to those bright stars now flown,  
Has left me as its hostage here instead.

Yet to all thirsty flowers the night brings dew,  
Dark trees above me whisper: "Love is here!"  
An eager joy besieges my sad heart,  
I am alone and free to fly to you,  
For death has given you back to me more dear  
Than when, life's debtors, we were forced to  
part.



## ON THE CLIFFS

HERE vernal grass breathes fragrance on the air,  
And sun-kissed bayberries add their pungent  
sweet;

Its aromatic toll  
The cedar yields, crouching defiant, bare,  
And twisted from the winter wind's defeat  
As it were a tortured soul.

Idly I watch the busy insect world,  
Where feathery grasses pierce the crisp gray  
moss

Above the sea-swept shore;  
Like the shy ferns by noon's hot sun uncurled,  
My thoughts expand, free as the clouds that  
cross

The sky, they float and soar.

Will he, too, climb my cliff some day and lie  
As though half in a dream his spirit were,  
And watch the distant sea?

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

Will he, too, hear its soft insistent cry,  
And answering music of the golden air  
As they have sung to me?

Now I must go, my feet shall leave no trace,  
Shall my thoughts wake no echo in his mind?  
Shall no faint shadow fall  
Across his heart and bring to him my face?  
Here where I dreamed of him, shall he not find  
Some token, hear some call?

## THE POET'S WISH

Oh, to fly free like a free bird,  
Unchained by love or life or time,  
And, singing, leave no soul unstirred  
By the sheer loveliness of rhyme!

Ah, poet, 't is the fettered heart  
That freedom brings to souls opprest;  
The burdened life that leads apart  
The sorrowing to a place of rest.

## THE RAIN

THE quiet lamentation of the rain  
Echoes my mood, and as it louder grows  
And splashes on the leaves and overflows,  
My heart within me swells with dreary pain  
At the old grief that comes to me again.  
I watch the shattered petals of the rose  
Beneath my window, wondering if she knows  
That by the longed-for shower she now is slain.

Discolored, mud-splashed, half her petals gone,  
This morning her young beauty proudly shone.  
Now, who would pluck her? Who would spare a  
look

For what was once so delicately fair,  
And flung its fragrance to the grateful air? —  
I'll seek once more my armchair and my book.

## THE CUP

SHE said: "Lift high the cup!"  
Of her arms' weariness she gave no sign,  
But smiling raised it up,  
That none might see or guess it held no wine.

## THE LANTERN

THERE is no moon and the night is dark,  
A strong south wind blows clouds like tattered  
ribbons across the sky.  
Bathed in the freshness of the all-obliterating  
wind  
I lean against a rock that is still warm with  
stored sunlight —  
Remote and forgotten is the daylight world.

Suddenly I see a circle of light coming toward  
me across the fields,  
Threading its way in and out among the apple-  
trees,  
A green moon sliding over the grass,  
Then a white one as it crosses the road,  
Its rays touch the hem of a white dress  
And light up the leaves of low-hanging branches.  
It draws near and for a moment the light is lifted  
up,  
Showing me your face!



## *THE LANTERN*

Your hair blown by the wind makes a halo on the  
darkness,

Your eyes leap to meet mine, half-startled, half-  
expectant.

You seem the very spirit of the wild summer  
night,

Answering the unconscious call of my heart.

I take the lantern from your slender hand;

Its light clashes on the darkness;

Now at a breath

It dies.

## HER SECRET

"My path is a path of ashes over lava."

(Thus did he say to me.)

"Have you no heart to feel my bitter sorrow?

Have you no eyes to see?

"You spend yourself for any suffering stranger,

Giving your last poor crumb

Of strength to all who ask; your calm eyes mad-  
den

Yet force me to be dumb.

"I may not even ask for your compassion,

Because I came too late.

Another has your pledge. Does my love give me

Less than you'd grant my hate?"

My heart gave answer though my lips were  
silent:

"Alas, my more than friend,

You'll never guess of what you have deprived  
me,

This is the end!"

“QUELLA CHE IMPARADISA LA MIA  
MENTE”

(Dante, “Paradiso,” Canto xxviii)

WITH you my soul first walked in Paradise;  
Now you are gone, and low on earth it lies,  
A butterfly, its wings torn by the winds  
Inexorable, it no refuge finds,  
Save in death only. Shall I find you there,  
And will you stoop with touch as light as air,  
And raise me up and say: “Since you have died  
For love of me, I’ll grant you at my side  
In Paradise with me to walk again.”  
Or will you turn on me a look of pain,  
Saying: “What right had you for love of me  
To die, a traitor to humanity?  
Is there no sorrow you could help to cheer  
On earth, before you came to find me here?  
Are there no wounds that you alone can bind,  
No over-burdened soul, distracted mind,  
That you can soothe, no weary broken heart  
That you can win to joy ere you depart?

## *THE JAR OF DREAMS*

Although your wings be tattered, you must soar,  
Striving to aid those who have suffered more  
Than you have known or dreamt of suffering;  
Then may you hither come and with you bring  
A self-forgetfulness that is the breath  
Of man's immortal triumph over death.  
Then shall you find your human life has been  
Lived in God's Heaven, by you unknown, un-  
seen

And when at last you come to meet me here,  
You'll know we never parted, O most dear."  
Such was she, and such words would she have  
said,  
My joy while living, my soul's life when dead.

## PANSIES

WHITE pansies, pure as all men's thoughts of  
you,

With faltering hands I place upon your grave,  
And purple ones, deep as the love I gave  
To you, my flower! Creature of sun and dew  
Your fragile petals scattered by the blast,  
Beyond our gaze your loveliness has passed  
For time's brief space, and we must say farewell.  
Yet from the treasure of your beauty fell  
Seeds in how many hearts to bloom and last!

## NOW IS THE NIGHT

Now is the night of my unhappiness  
Fallen upon me from the wintry sky,  
Though stars there be they gleam so small, so  
    high  
And look so coldly down on my distress  
That I draw tight the curtain. . . . Sleeplessness  
Shuts me apart from all who sleep, and I  
Sit by my burnt out hearth eternally  
Sorrow companioning my loneliness.

The once familiar cheerful room grows strange  
By the light of my sole candle. Shadows change  
The shape of things! Who sits in her old chair? . . .  
I startle as the tall clock on the stair  
Stirs and strikes loudly. . . . In a little while  
It will be day! . . . The world must see me  
    smile.

## AN ANGEL COMES

AN angel comes and looks into my eyes,  
With strange new joy I draw a deeper breath  
“Surely Thou art Love!” my soul with rapture  
cries,  
“Yes I am Love, although men call me Death.”

## A SLEEPLESS NIGHT

LONG had I on my hopeless pillow tost,  
Listening to voices of the summer night,  
Sleep, the long wooed, now seemed forever lost;  
I was half-mad for very tiredness  
And writhed beneath imagination's might.  
My room a prison, I felt stifled, bound,  
The owl's cry with its strange, inhuman sound,  
Seemed the sad echo of a vague distress  
For unremembered grief that was my own,  
And unescapable because unknown.  
I could not bear the tapping of the vine  
Like skeleton fingers on the window-pane,  
Calling me to some place where I before  
Had gone, whither I feared to go again,  
Some unknown grief dwelt there, some grief of  
mine,  
Now half-forgotten and thus feared the more.

The sullen baying of a distant hound  
Waked by the splendors of the summer night



*A SLEEPLESS NIGHT*

To hunt some tiny thing half-dead with fright,  
Broke on my ear. My heart, with sudden  
bound,

Felt it was hunted by the Hounds of Fate  
And rescue would not come, or come too late.

Fleeing in horror from my haunted room  
I trod the stairs, trembling to hear them creak,  
And, hand on bannister, crept through the  
gloom

Down to the hall. The moonlight on the floor  
Made patterns strange to catch me unaware,  
Weird forms I saw, and feared lest they should  
speak,

Vague presences from which I shuddering fled.  
Out to the porch I slipped — Peace found me  
there,

And took me by the hand and comforted.

Beneath the sky's blue dome, my littleness  
Fell from me like a cloak in the free air  
Surrounding me, untrammelled by the bars  
Of my imprisoned spirit. Happiness  
Descended on me from the silent stars.

## THE WILDERNESS

HE turned, resentful. Suddenly alone  
Her soul went wandering through a wilderness  
Of pain, and how it got there could not guess.  
Her sky was darkened and all birds were flown;  
No flowers were there, nought but gray sand and  
stone,

Where only brambles grew that caught her dress  
And pierced her feet; in terror and distress  
She turned to him. Sorrow in his eyes shone.

Then through the desolation came a stir  
Of night-wind sighing in the desert grass.  
She felt it lift her hair, she felt it pass  
Like soothing fingers on her troubled brow,  
Gone was her pride, gone was her grief, for now  
Heaven's doors were opened by his need of her!

## SYMPATHY

INTO the sanctuary of your grief I crept,  
Through love of you grown bold, yet half-afraid;  
In a dark corner there I knelt and prayed  
That God might help you, as, all sorrow-swept,  
You crouched before Love's altar, and still kept  
Your hands uplifted towards that holy shrine;  
Around your head I saw pale radiance shine,  
Love's crown of sorrow, and at last you wept.

The ice was melted and the healing spring  
Of tears broke forth, you murmured low a  
name, —

No longer overborne and sore bested,  
Since in your heart Love's voice had power to  
sing

That song so old, so new, yet still the same.  
I knew you safe and went forth comforted.

## DEATH, LIFE, FEAR

I WILL confront Death smiling, and no tremor  
Shall shake my eager heart at his approach;  
Why should I fear him, since his hand brings  
freedom?

Does the plant turn in shrinking from the light?  
The bud refuse to feel the blossom growing  
Within its heart that soon must open wide?  
Brief is the pang of that divine compelling  
Which frees its petals to the blessed sun.  
No! Death I fear not! Even Life I challenge,  
With all its cruelties and possible wrongs!  
Love, joy and torture, sin and aspiration,  
All would I know and clasp them to my breast,  
From many-colored threads weave to comple-  
tion

The garment of my soul, as is Thy will.  
But, Lord, one pang alone I pray Thee, spare  
me,

Lord, never let me meet the eyes of Fear,  
Or meet them but as conqueror to destroy them,

*DEATH, LIFE, FEAR*

And never let me bow an abject head!  
Set firm my feet upon Life's narrow pathway!  
Cold, writhing hands from the dread chasm below  
Snatch at my ankles! Let me walk unwavering,  
And conquer Fear as the sun does the mist.

Lord, I beseech Thee, keep my soul unshaken;  
Thou, the unfearing, conquering Source of all  
things,  
Thou would'st not that Thy child should be  
afraid.

## WILD SWANS IN FLIGHT

THE wild swans fly athwart the light,  
Above the darkening land below,  
And as they sweep in southward flight,  
Catch the last rays of sunset glow.

In long gyration overhead  
They curve in lines of blue and gold,  
An arabesque of beauty spread  
Across a sky grown dim and cold.

## A SCHUMANN STRING QUARTETTE

A SONG of love, of twilight, of the stars,  
Speaking directly to the heart of man  
In wordless eloquence; a letting down the bars  
Of speech, in some diviner plan  
Than earth has room for, or the tongue  
Has power to frame.

A challenge from eternity that is flung  
To wake my sleeping soul with the pure flame  
Of love unutterable save in sound  
Unchained, my spirit wanders in a throng  
Of memories as through forests vast  
At midnight and alone, her solemn round  
The moon is pacing toward the dawn at last.

### COUPLET

MUSIC, thou art the memory of the soul:  
Who fears thee not has ever been heart-whole.



ADAGIO. BRAHMS, OPUS 108

THAT swelling note upon the violin  
O'erflows my heart as firelight does the room  
Where its soft glow, by darkness curtained in,  
But shines the warmer for the outside gloom.  
Majestic chords sweep through my open door,  
And high above them soars one long sweet note,  
As though to conquer the wild torrent's roar  
A nightingale sang on with quivering throat.

## NEUTRALITY

(1915)

DEAR CHRIST! That man must have a heart of  
stone

Who could unmoved look on this world to-day,  
Where valiant little Belgium stands at bay,  
Outraged, besieged in battles not her own,  
Save as her plighted word is hers alone;  
The Huns let loose on her to burn and slay,  
Like baffled, angry beasts kept from their prey,  
Seeking revenge on cottage and on throne!

Thou bad'st us love our foes, shall we forgive  
Another's wrongs? Women and children cry  
To Heaven for help against the German horde,  
Shall they defile Thy temples and still live —  
Temples not made with hands — while we stand  
by,  
Our swords half-drawn to fight? How long, O  
Lord?

## RAIN IN BELGIUM

(After the first German gas attack)

THE heavy rain beats down, beats down,  
On city streets whence all have fled,  
Where tottering ruins skyward frown  
Above the silent, staring dead.  
Here shall ye raise your Kaiser's throne,  
Stained with the blood for freedom shed.

Here, where men fought for breath in vain,  
Who in fair fight had all withstood,  
Here on this poison-haunted plain,  
Enriched with babes' and women's blood,  
Here shall ye sow your German grain,  
Here shall ye reap your children's food.

The harvest ripens. — Reaper, come!  
Bring children singing Songs of Hate,  
Taught by the mother in the home,  
Fit comrade, she, for such a mate.

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

Soon shall ye reap what ye have sown,  
God's mills grind thoroughly though late.

The heavy rain beats down, beats down;  
I hear in it the tramp of Fate!

## THE "UNKNOWN SOLDIER"

Who was he who once this poor garment wore —  
This tattered fragment of humanity,  
Snatched from its pitiful all-covering clay  
That he might serve a nation's pride to-day?  
His country's flag for pall  
In heavy folds may fall  
Round him who for long nights lay shivering  
On muddy ground, wishing the warmth of spring  
Would not so long delay;  
Longing that night should pass,  
Yet dreading day —  
The day that soon to him his death might  
bring —  
To him so young!

Like the upspringing grass,  
A tiny, sword-shaped thing,  
On a scarce trodden way;  
Far from great cities and their majesty,  
Yet something made him thrust  
His head through the half-frozen crust

## *THE JAR OF DREAMS*

Of earth. . . . He shall remain unknown,  
Like the wild fragrance from the forest blown  
Unnoticed, or the salt smell of the sea.

Yes! He was even less than they,  
But one among the many blades of grass  
Trodden by all who pass  
Into the friendly clay.

Yet something made him grow and long to  
live. . . .

Proud buttercups and dandelions bent  
At the bleak wind of war, and gave their gold;  
He had no gold to give.

He had naught but himself, and so he went. . . .  
The fairest flowers in all the land are sent  
To wreath his coffin now,

At his approach the proudest bares his head.  
What does he care for this? Does he even know  
The honor paid to him, the "Unknown Dead"?

## FORGIVE ME NOT!

FORGIVE me not! Hate me, and I shall know  
Some of Love's fire still burns within your breast!  
Forgiveness finds its home in hearts at rest,  
On dead volcanoes, only, lies the snow.

## SONNET

SOME hearts there be with love so surfeited,  
That they prefer the plaudits of the crowd  
To the clear flame on secret altar vowed,  
By all but one unknown, unvisited.  
And some there be who from great love have fled,  
Though offered silently and unallowed,  
In that they are too scrupulous, too proud,  
To enjoy the feast whose giver goes unfed.

Yet pity not the artist who has wrought  
Enduring beauty, though his world be blind,  
Nor the deaf Beethoven, poor and distraught,  
Who yet could weave such music in his mind.  
The heart, too, has its triumphs, though unsought,  
And a great love its great reward shall find.



## THE POET'S TASK

BEAUTY, thou dwellest in the eye  
Of him who loves thee and can wait,  
Content to live, content to die,  
Asking no further gift of fate  
Than this, to count naught great or small,  
But guess the soul informing all.

*Struggle and strive the poet must  
Till hand and brain return to dust.*

Listen to the low whispering  
Of Nature! Count all sorrow naught  
That teaches you the holiest thing  
From the heart's deepest pang is wrought;  
Suffer, nor count your suffering vain  
That brings balm to a sad world's pain.

*Struggle and strive the poet must  
Till hand and brain return to dust.*

## FOLLOW ME, LOVE

(Song)

FOLLOW me, Love, through the day's long flight,  
Let thy song in my ears ring free,  
For soon I shall sleep in the starless night,  
Sink in the measureless sea.

But why should I fear though the night be dark  
And oblivion's waters deep?  
They cannot quench the immortal spark,  
Love in the ashes of sleep.

## SINCERITY

STAND firm, my soul! Go free, and never bind  
Yourself with beauty of another's thought!  
Make your own crown of gold that you have  
wrought;

Your kingdom in your own God-given mind!  
Better the pearl that you have dived to find  
In painful depths, and to the light have brought,  
In its rough shell by your bruised fingers sought,  
Than richer jewels other hands have mined!

Love your own love, and even, if it must be,  
Sin your own sin, thus learning to repent!  
Eyes washed with tears sometimes more clearly  
see

Than those that have but smiled in smug con-  
tent;

So may you cheer a brother's misery,  
Bringing him comfort he cannot resent.

## BY AN EMPTY CRIB

FROM sweet restraint of loving arms, alone  
Upon his shadowy path we saw him go  
All unaccompanied. We who loved him so  
Could not go with him; we who would have  
    flown

To guard his tender feet from briar or stone!  
Fearless he went, nor looked back from the door,  
Leaving his best loved playthings on the floor,  
His precious wooden horse, now sorrow's throne.

These are our treasures, — these alone are left  
Of joy and laughter in the empty house  
Heavy with silence. Even a little mouse  
Heard in the wainscot, seems a crash of doom!  
You start and seize my hand. — Not quite  
    bereft

Are we, sharing our sorrow in his room.

## THE GIFT

CHRISTMAS is come, and I have naught for thee;  
My hands are empty, weary is my heart.  
But yet, look closer! Thou mayest clearly see  
My weary heart finds rest within thy love,  
My empty hands are full of love for thee!

## AFFIRMATION

THOU art the distant hills,  
Thou art the sun setting through the stems of  
the pine trees,  
Thou art the rising moon whose light on the mist  
Makes the valley look like an ocean at my feet,  
Thou art the silent stars  
Which yet speak to me of unutterable beauty,  
Thou art the poor wood-gatherer  
Staggering homeward under the load piled high  
above her head.

I see and love all these things,  
And loving them am filled with solemn joy;  
Thou art that love and that joy,  
Making me for the moment part of Thee. . . .  
Ah, my Lord, my Love, my Soul!

## HIS FAREWELL

THINK of me, if you think at all,  
As one who tried to pour  
His treasure into hands so small  
They spilled it on the floor.

## A DOOR AJAR

A LILAC touched him softly on the hand,  
As he went stumbling by an old stone wall  
Along an unfrequented road.  
Its fragrance sweetened all the soft spring air,  
And his young back forgot its heavy load,  
And suddenly he knew the world was fair,  
Although he had come back to find them dead.  
"All those who made my home are gone," he  
    said,  
"Yet other homes there are; a house is near,  
Or lilacs were not here."  
Then suddenly he came upon a gate  
Between the stern stone walls set open wide,  
Though roses threw long arms from every side  
To bar his entrance there.  
The moss-grown path of brick, narrow and  
    strait,  
Whose unpruned borders threw their blossoms  
    wide  
On the neglected grass; that half-closed door,



*A DOOR AJAR*

Those dim, unshuttered windows, did they wait  
For someone's coming? Should he look in-  
side? . . .

Though uninhabited it seemed,  
He knew it was the house of which he dreamed.  
He had been there before. . . .

He threw his knapsack on the ground,  
His entering footsteps made no sound,  
He knew the pictures on the wall,  
He knew the very rugs upon the floor  
In that strange room where he had never  
been. . . .

All was familiar, even to the narrow door  
Leading into a smaller twilight room,  
Where grape-vines thick before the window hung,  
Making a green, delicious-scented gloom;  
And there he found her. . . .

Afterwards he knew  
That what had seemed most dream-like was  
most true.

He followed where with gentle trust she led,  
Showed him her childhood's room untenanted,

## THE JAR OF DREAMS

Save by her memories. On the dusty floor  
Lay her once-cherished doll and battered toys,  
And still he felt he had been there before.  
He laughed, recalling how with other boys  
He had slain giants, and how he had made  
Whistles from willow boughs, in whose green  
shade

He had dreamed dreams that now he told to her.  
For those lost dreams he found a comforter  
In her brown eyes' deep, self-forgetting look,  
Like the clear waters of the shadowed brook  
Where as a boy he played.

Then as the day grew dim and twilight fell  
Between them like a touch,  
He raised her hand as lightly as a feather.  
"O new old friend," he prayed,  
"Grant that to-morrow we may be together!"  
"Ah, no! Good-bye," she said. "Farewell!  
For my to-morrows are not mine to give;  
This empty house is not for those who live,  
It is a house of dreams. . . . You come too late!  
For one who has forgotten I must wait."

### *A DOOR AJAR*

She watched him disappearing in the gloom,  
She turned back slowly to the empty room. . . .

“O careless cruelty of love long dead,  
Yet still my gaoler without bolt or bar,  
Why did you walk out from my heart,” she said,  
“And leave the door ajar?”

## LET ME SING

LET me sing as I must,  
Just a word, then away,  
Ere oblivion's dust  
Cover all as it may;  
As the humming-birds dart,  
Poised on shafts of the sun,  
Seek the flower's deepest heart,  
Yet no bough rest upon.

Would you curb my swift flight?  
Make me delve like the bee?  
My despair, my delight,  
All unasked come to me.  
If to work out my thought  
I should busily strive,  
It would all come to nought,  
I should die in your hive!

In the sky, sun or rain,  
Like the birds I find songs,

*LET ME SING*

I can guess not, nor chain,  
What to nature belongs;  
Now it 's here, now it 's there!  
Ask the Archer his aim,  
Not the arrow in air  
That scarce knows whence it came!

## HOW DOES A WOMAN LOVE?

How does a woman love? . . . If she were free  
To tell her love in one revealing word  
It would remain unuttered and unheard;  
An unacknowledged joy, a mystery  
Even to herself. Her love may never be  
Proclaimed or whispered, since that all unstirred  
She hides it in her breast as might a bird  
Brood o'er her young in some deep-hearted tree.

Thus she conceals her treasure; and her song  
Is silent when she hears a footstep pass:  
Then, with circuitous flight in the long grass,  
Before you she appears, limping along,  
Enticing your pursuit with moaning cries,  
Soon with swift flight to mock you from the skies.

## THE FIRE

ON ashes of dead dreams I build my fire,  
On ashes of past hopes kindle desire  
Of things so great, that seeing them I've won  
From failure one more step to lead me on!

## “DO YOU REMEMBER?”

“Do you remember?” What three words can  
hold

All these have held of rapture or despair? . . .  
Beneath the beggar’s coat a joy more rare  
May hide than all triumphant Beauty’s cold  
Indifference could dream. They can unfold  
A pageant of remorse and love and care,  
Of grief and unguessed passion dwelling where  
Mere insignificance our eyes behold.

What thoughts awake within me at their spell!  
What dreams, what hopes, what fears, what  
memories

Of long heart-shaking hours! What wistful eyes  
That gaze into my own. . . . To none I tell  
All they would say to me. . . . from the dim  
past

The stars break through the clouds for me at last!



## THE NIGHT WIND

THROUGH the mazes of love, through the mazes  
of doubt,

In the pine wood by the sea,  
I watch the stars thread in and out,  
And my heart sings loud in me.  
The wild wind blows through the wild warm  
night —

O wind, be yours the blame,  
If my heart leaps up to the moon's pale gold,  
Though reason whispers: "Shame!  
Are you so young who should now be old?"

O turbulent heart, be still!  
Go back to your safe little house in the fold  
Of the hollow under the hill!"

"No, no! I've no roof but the sky and the stars,  
No floor but the moonlit sea,  
Nor time nor wisdom can tether my heart  
When the night wind sets it free!"

## WITHIN AND WITHOUT

(Alcaics)

WITHOUT all is cold with winter's austerity,  
But blazing logs light all the room cheerily,  
Save in the dim mysterious corners  
Where the blue twilight is lost in darkness.

Beloved, your face is a beautiful battlefield,  
Where blue and golden-rose strive for the mastery;  
Quivering flames rising and falling  
Light up your eyes and then leave them shadowed.

As all unnoticed I watch her, my Beautiful,  
White slender hands enlaced, sitting there dreamily,  
Her work fallen on the floor, unheeded,  
Softly ensnarled by the playful kitten.

My throbbing heart leaps in my breast suddenly,  
The room's too small to hold all my love of her,

*WITHIN AND WITHOUT*

I seek the outside cold and twilight  
With all its limitless, darkling spaces.

I climb the hillside, filled with the infinite  
Beauty of nature that speaks to my heart of  
her,  
The mist hides all below save pine-trees  
Rising above its blue sea like mast-heads.

The moon now rises slowly and solemnly;  
Touched by her beauty's ever new miracle,  
Alone I stand upon my island,  
Looking for one to enjoy it with me.

Softly the stars now peer at me questioningly,  
Looking for you. My heart, too, is calling you,  
The vastness of the earth and heaven  
Is but a part of my love, All-dearest. . . .

Swift the door opened, warm hands then drew  
me in,  
Into the heart of her love and the firelight.  
"Why did you leave me here, forgotten?"  
"I never left you, I took you with me!"

## WHEN LIGHTS ARE OUT

WHEN lights are out and all is dark,  
Eyes of flowers, eyes of flame,

How you haunt me!

With its old power the smothered spark  
Of love in ashes once more came  
To sting and taunt me.

## A VISIT

THE dusty road, and the long hill above it,  
I climb, and weary not though it be steep;  
Long is the way, but I know it well and love it,  
For the thought of you lies in my heart asleep.

The dust is gray on the leaves of the roadside  
tansy

That yields its pungent fragrance to the heat;  
I smell it, all unheeding, while my fancy  
Plays with what I shall tell you when we meet.

A purple gentian in its cool green sheathing  
Catches my eye; and its rich, quiet hue,  
Retiring in the shade, faint perfume breathing,  
Mingles in dreamlike memories of you.

## A TRIOLET

BENEATH the stars where foam and sand  
Gleam pale as ghosts of bygone years,  
I sudden miss your guiding hand;  
Beneath the stars, where foam and sand  
All seem unreal save creeping fears,  
The waves dash cold as long-shed tears,  
Beneath the stars where foam and sand  
Gleam pale as ghosts of bygone years.

## A SUMMER NIGHT

### I

THE stars seem very far and clear to-night,  
June's whippoorwill calls sorrowing from the  
trees

Dark moving overhead; the rising breeze  
Makes wild, tumultuous music to affright  
My timid heart with overmuch delight.  
Gone now is all its hard-won calm and ease,  
While from the past, phantoms arise and seize  
And shake my soul with long-forgotten might.

Such were the stars and such the wind that blew  
Long years ago, when down this woodland road  
We walked together. Darkness hid your face,  
But could not hide the love that round me  
flowed;

I walked in dreams, heedless of time or space,  
The night, the trees, the stars, all, all were you.

## A SUMMER NIGHT

### II

POOR fool! Go back! You thought yourself so  
strong,

When even a touch can send you down the years'  
Long avenue of arching joys and fears!  
Go back into the house where you belong;  
These starlit musings fit the very young,  
To be forgotten when youth disappears:  
Dash from your faded cheek these foolish tears,  
Now with past dreams the kindly present wrong.

Yet how in any life could I believe  
If aught of me must with the body die?  
No, "Life is mine!" my heart is clamoring,  
Nor can I stifle its insistent cry:  
"Mine is the past and all I may achieve,  
Love, joy, dreams, agony, mine is everything!"



## THE TORCH

You are the torch and I am the taper you  
lighted,

The world since we met is a world never dreamed  
of before,

There are heights, there are depths of emotion I  
formerly slighted,

I slight them no more.

A ring-fence of dulness encircled my world as I  
knew it,

My thoughts, like blind mice in a cage, ran  
around and around,

With a touch you have opened my eyes to see  
over and through it,

I am free and unbound.

Unconsciously blessing you came, when my need  
was the sorest,

Through the wide-spreading jungle of doubt and  
of stupid despair,

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

I followed your steps to the high arching aisles  
of the forest,  
You welcomed me there.

Farewell and farewell! I would tell you just once  
ere you leave me  
That the shackles have fallen from my soul at  
the touch of your thought  
And nothing again shall imprison or conquer  
or grieve me,  
I have found what I sought.

## THE ROSE

ONE deep red rose I dropped into his grave,  
So small a thing to give so great a friend,  
Yet well he knew it was my heart I gave  
And must fare on without it to the end.

## AUTUMN

ON the pine-needles a faint track I follow,  
Criss-crossed with partridge-vines and berries  
red

Where once were pale pink blossoms; to the hol-  
low

Where we so often silent sat instead  
Of talking, finding silence dearer  
Than any words that could be thought or said.  
No sound but the woodthrush note to draw us  
nearer

In a magic circle with the boughs o'erhead.

To-day I hear naught but the distant calling  
Of the wayward crow, almost to music grown  
So far it is . . . and the rustle of leaves falling,  
By autumn breezes through the forest blown.  
The path that we so often trod together,  
With downcast eyes, I now retrace alone,  
And, musing, see a delicate lost feather,  
From a bird's wing that far away has flown.

## WHEN I AM DEAD

LOOK not upon my face when I am dead  
And cannot meet with smiles your troubled gaze,  
Grieve not to know that from this clay is fled  
My spirit, that still lingering with you stays  
Although you see it not.

I would learn to forget and be forgot  
Even by you, Beloved, even by you!

If you should think of me when I am gone,  
Think of me as a bird that by your window flew  
Singing and soon forgotten, not as one  
Whose heart shook in her breast at thought of  
you.

Better not think at all  
For I might hear your call  
And I wish to forget and be forgot  
Even by you, Beloved, even by you!

## NO MORE DREAMS

FAINT as the scent of unseen roses steeped in  
sunlight,

Dim as the sound of distant cow-bells wandering  
home,

Half-perceived in dreaming, whence and  
whither,

Tell me, unbidden Fancies, why you come?

Leave me at last, dear Dreams! nor ask that I  
remember

The long day with its red, red rose that bloomed  
and died,

Dreamless I would sink into the arms of  
silence,

Dreamless float out with the out-going tide.

Let me lie quiet here, my head in the long  
grasses,

Unheeding all; to feel and hope and sing no more!

Lose myself in the sky above me deep as ocean,  
Alone upon a sea without a shore!

## PEOPLE AND PLACES





## THE SAGE

ONE thought is tugging at his heart to-day,  
One word he cannot say.  
He loves too late who never loved before,  
Though Love stood at his door;  
Yes, Love stood at his door and smiled at him,  
While he impatient, grim,  
Waits, hand on latch, unconscious of the rose  
That Love before him throws;  
He treads upon it with unheeding feet,  
Nor guesses it is sweet.

But that all happened a long time ago,  
And then he did not know  
What he could only learn when she had died.  
His wisdom and his pride,  
All, all are helpless to console him now,  
Weary of heart and brow.

## A POET

No mountain snows distilled your purity,  
It springs from the white center of the flame  
Where iron burns . . . and earth that thwarts  
the aim

Of inspiration there consumed must be.  
Rich in past suffering, to posterity  
You give your harvest, soon all men shall claim  
Your riddles as their knowledge, yet your fame  
A lasting truth and beauty holds in fee.

In this crude world your spirit shrinks apart,  
Fortressed in silence from the unwelcome crowd,  
Though you draw men as shady pools draw birds,  
The few within your citadel allowed  
Find you as chary of your thought as words;  
Who would know you must seek you in your art.

## AFTER THE FUNERAL

### *First woman*

“She sat there by the coffin, her eyes wet  
Like storm-drenched violets, though a look was  
set

On her small face! . . . He was a cruel man,  
The Dead! . . . And she the bird he silenced . . .  
Yet . . .”

### *Second woman*

“You’ve guessed it too? . . . Hush! Say it not  
aloud,

Or you, who know what the unseeing crowd  
Could never know, in thus betraying her,  
Would be her slayer even though unavowed.

“He killed her spirit in slow, painful death;  
She drew a thousand tortures in each breath  
That passed her pallid lips, once used to smiles,  
And though, ‘Thou shalt not kill!’ the good  
book saith,

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

“Hearts driven desperate, desperate means employ,

And which is worse, the soul's life to destroy  
In one you've sworn to cherish, with intent  
Crush every innocent fancy, every joy,

“Or, crazed by bitter memories that throng,  
Of all that she had borne, and borne too long,  
Roused by a sudden burst of smouldering hate,  
In one swift moment end a lingering wrong?”

## UPSTREAM

THROUGH starless, unrelenting night you breast  
The stream, unwavering, towards your chosen  
goal;

Heavy the waters that against you roll,  
As groping on you struggle without rest;  
Your footing insecure, your heart opprest,  
Yet with exultant strength against the whole  
Weight of the torrent, you, with steadfast soul,  
Keep to your course, undaunted, undistressed.

To be yourself, untamed to live or die!  
What though the waters close above your head,  
Your strenuous task brings its own victory,  
Its own delight. And yet, when you are dead,  
And undisturbed by the waves buffeting,  
One heart there is that shall no longer sing.

## THE CYNIC

WHEN two who have loved well, had but one  
heart,

One purpose, one desire,

When they, like logs burnt through, have fallen  
apart

In life's consuming fire,

Why gather all the embers in a heap,

Blow on them till they burn

A little longer and their ashes keep

To fill a funeral urn?

## HER HOUSE

O HOUSE, where she lived, you hold her no more!  
I passed you to-day for the first time  
Since they bore away  
That frail flower, her body,  
And her gay, gallant, laughing, dreaming,  
Always charming self  
Left you. . . . To go where? . . .

You follow me with mournful eyes, O House,  
As I pass slowly by,  
Yet your shuttered windows are as the eyes of  
    one dead.

Gone is all your sparkling promise  
And nothing remains but dust!  
Dust on the steps and sills,  
Dust dulling the panes each side of the door.  
Like tear-stains on a forlorn child's face.

Eager fingers once touched many times a day  
That now tarnished bell-pull;

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

How often have I, and better than I,  
Waited humbly wondering,  
“Will she be in? Will she see me?  
Or will a cold ‘not at home’  
Send me heavy hearted away?”

O House, you are indeed forlorn, bereft!  
Your life has departed,  
Leaving dull emptiness instead! . . .  
Spring is in the city street;  
It is moving in the soft air,  
The converging row of lindens,  
Climbing the hill,  
Are covering their pinky-brown buds  
With a delicate veil of green,  
More guessed at than perceived.  
The city sparrows are busy and loquacious,  
Bare-headed children run about gaily  
Hailing each other from the doorstep,  
Tossing a ball across the street,  
Jostling staid old gentlemen.  
Everything is suddenly alive  
At the call of Spring!



## *HER HOUSE*

But for you, dear House, there is no spring,  
No awakening.

Your soul has gone forth and left you  
desolate! . . .

Better so, beloved House!  
I could not bear to see you  
Bright and smiling as before,  
Welcoming a new mistress.  
Those steps where I shall wait no more,  
Let them be untrodden!  
Good-bye, dear House, good-bye!

## AN UNIMPORTANT MAN

HE loved Life's disinherited,  
The rich and great he passed them by  
Scarce seeing them, he sought instead  
Those who had tears to dry.

Though rich he was a gentleman,  
If poor he would have been the same,  
Another's wrongs alone could fan  
His quiet heart to flame.

## THE SEER

(Rondel)

No human bondage can subdue his soul,  
No mortal fetters may his heart enchain  
Who sees the face of truth! Never again  
His neck will bow beneath this world's control.  
Calamity he fears not, men's disdain  
For seeming failure, death, or life's grim pain!  
No human bondage can subdue his soul,  
No mortal fetters may his heart enchain.

He shuns not the rough path, but seeks his goal  
Unflinching, not counting loss or gain.  
With bleeding feet, unheeding sun or rain,  
He climbs, and, joyful, gives his life as toll.  
No human bondage can subdue his soul,  
No mortal fetters may his heart enchain.

## TWO PORTRAITS

A SLIMY saurian sitting in the sun,  
He seemed to me when lounging by her side  
I saw him first, and loathing was begun  
Of him that in my heart has never died.

She, like a wild shy lily in deep wood,  
Her golden head bent on its graceful stalk,  
Shed beauty all around her as she stood,  
Half wrapped in dreams, half listening to his  
talk;

A sunbeam gone astray in the dark maze  
Of old primeval trees through which he crept  
To warm his reptile blood in her bright rays! . . .  
In hopeless wrath I fled them both and wept.

## NIKKO

THE cryptomerias of old Japan  
Reach to the sky as freshly washed with dew,  
As heedless of the misery of man  
    As when the world was new.

'Twixt their long avenues of stately shade,  
Great sepulchres of monarchs dead and gone,  
Like scarlet flowers that can never fade,  
    Gleam in the setting sun.

Bright red they gleam, as glorying in the blood  
Shed for the kings of men in ages past,  
When lives were but as drops to swell the flood  
    That brought them here at last.

These lacquered monuments speak to the sky,  
Disdaining mortal life with its brief span,  
Of pride that worshiped self, nor feared to die  
    For glory of Japan. . . .

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

But when the nightingale sings in the trees  
Where the unnumbered graves the hillsides  
throng,

She sings of those who gladly died, that these  
Might be remembered long.

## TOKYO

WHITE falls the snow on Fuji, whiter yet  
It lingers on the flowering plum below  
My balcony. The roofs of Tokyo  
With its soft finger-prints are scarcely wet,  
Like cheeks of children who so soon forget,  
And where tears fell with brighter roses' glow.  
Thus the snug little houses melt the snow  
From warm tiled roofs and drive away regret.

The sun breaks forth and now my plum tree  
    smiles,  
Charming its feathery burden into dew,  
That all its flowers may drink a health to Spring!  
For February in Japan beguiles  
Even my homesick heart from thoughts of you,  
New England, still icebound and blustering.

## A DESERTED BUDDHA <sup>1</sup>

CARVED in the living rock from days remote,  
Buddha, thou sitt'st, one with the mountain-  
side,

And gazest with calm eyes o'er valleys wide  
And heaped-up hills where opal cloud-mists  
float.

Dust are the busy brain and hands devout  
That fashioned thee; dust, too, the multitude  
That sought thee in thy mountain solitude,  
And once with worship compassed thee about.

Gone is the jewel wisdom from thy front,  
Plucked off in sacrilege. . . . Above thy head  
The sheltering roof is gone, by time decayed;  
Yet still thou wear'st a smile as was thy wont  
Through ages past, unworshiped and alone,  
Save when the alien brings a casual stone.

<sup>1</sup> This wayside Buddha near Miyanoshita, Japan, has been robbed of the jewel in its forehead, but still has in front of it a cairn, to which most passers-by add their stone.



## ENOSHIMA

(As seen from Kamakura for the last time)

LIKE a flower-bell floating on the sunset,  
A Lotos, blue on rosy waves of light,  
While below the purple ocean whispering  
Softly gathers to its breast the night.

In changing glory hung where sky meets ocean,  
Farewell, Enoshima! Through gathering shades  
You grow but fairer as your dreamlike beauty  
Stamped on my heart from my strained vision  
fades!

## A GLANCE

HER sad young face looked from a window high,  
While wistfully she watched the idle throng  
That in the street beneath goes sauntering by,  
Heedless of eyes above that look and long.

Till one, most beautiful, most richly dressed,  
With springing joyous steps that almost danced,  
The leader in the laugh and merry jest  
Turned as she passed and at the window glanced.

One instant soul met soul without disguise;  
The watcher, startled, read a grief more deep  
Than her own sorrow, in the smiling eyes  
Of one who laughed because she dared not weep.

## TO J. P. P. ON HER BIRTHDAY

(With a copy of the "Heart of the Weed")

I do not come to you bearing my sheaves  
From a rich harvest, proud of victory won,  
My weary hands are full of withered leaves,  
Only a weed, none noticed it, and none

Glanced at its blossoms as they passed them by;  
Yet it rejoiced beneath the sun and rain,  
Its flowers, though small, looked up at the blue  
    sky,  
It lived its little life of joy and pain.

Only a weed, and yet no flower that grew  
In the Queen's garden knew a keener bliss  
When gentle twilight slaked its thirst with dew,  
Or felt more rapturous joy at the sun's kiss.

These withered leaves have once known sun  
    and rain,

And at your touch they still may live again!

## THE SYRINGA

AT a small window underneath the roof  
A woman sits and sews through the long days  
Of heat or cold, and if she looks below,  
A row of barrels meets her listless gaze  
In the untidy yard, or she may see  
A half-starved cat who knows not how to purr,  
And shrinks at every footstep passing by.  
Naught else is seen by her —  
What matters it? — Until she dies  
She cannot choose but work unceasingly  
While daylight lasts. Then stiffly she may rise  
And look up to the narrow strip of sky  
Hemmed in by high brick walls. Her weary eyes  
Perchance may see a star,  
How far, alas, how far!

Once every year a breath of happiness  
Comes faintly to her as she sits and sews;  
For June brings dreams that still have power to  
    bless.

## THE SYRINGA

The scent of an unseen syringa bush  
From round the corner of a neighboring yard  
Comes up to her, and memory with a rush  
Brings back the careless, unforgotten past.

Once more she is a girl and sews her seam  
On the broad step of a green-shuttered house,  
Syringas on each side, and in a dream  
She sees again the narrow brick-laid path  
That leads, box-edged, to a white picket gate.  
Syringas arch above her sunny head,  
She folds her sewing as the day grows late,  
And well-known footsteps sound along the street,  
Familiar faces nod at her and smile;  
Then one comes up the path with diffident  
    haste,  
And for a while . . .

The dead seem near, those others far away. —  
They have forgotten — she has had her day.

TO M. D. F.

IN her slight body dwelt a mighty soul,  
A flame within a flower, infinitude  
Of sympathy for all, gentle or rude,  
Who crossed her path. Her smile made the sick  
whole,  
Cheered the unhappy, brought peace out of  
strife,  
Wakened dull eyes to see, cold hearts to feel.  
To many a timid soul she could reveal  
Courage unguessed before, its inner life.

Now she is gone; and we, who are bereft,  
Mourning in wonder that such leaping flame  
Could sink to ashes in the one short hour  
That she was with us, know the spark she left  
Of human love, in many a heart, with power  
To warm some humble lives unknown to fame.

## TO A GIRL PLAYING THE VIOLIN

LIKE a young pine-tree swaying,  
When winds of winter blow,  
Its branches lightly weighing  
The burden of the snow,  
You bend and you recover  
Beneath the tempest's might:  
A maid who's found her lover,  
A bird who's taking flight.

Held by the firm caressing  
Of your warm glowing cheek,  
Secrets beyond all guessing  
Your violin may speak,  
Secrets of softest magic  
It whispers in your ear,  
Then sings them, gay or tragic,  
For those who know, to hear.

Deep in our own heart weaving  
Dreams deeper far than thought,

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

Of joy beyond all grieving,  
Unheralded, unsought,  
Of yet unknown, unpondered,  
Deep treasures of the heart,  
Where far from you we've wandered,  
Lost in your music's art.



## AT A MILLINER'S WINDOW

HER face was dull and sad and plain,  
Yet something made me wonder why  
She stood so long against the pane  
Of the shop-window. "Vanity  
Lurks in strange tenements!" thought I,  
For there were only hats to see,  
And hats too gay for such as she.

Her work-worn hand caressed her hair,  
Thick curly hair, but not well kept;  
No one would have called her fair,  
Yet in her somber eyes there slept  
Such eager life, I could have wept  
To think, with all that hidden fire,  
A costly hat was her desire.

Hats trimmed with every flower that grows,  
Each one she studied carefully.  
"I'll get the white one with the rose,  
He'll like me in it!" dreamily

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

She mused, and her thought spoke to me.  
She turned and saw me with a start,  
And blushed to know I read her heart.  
The Rose of Happiness, I thought,  
The Rose of Love was what she sought.

## THE FACTORY GIRL'S EVENING

Now it is evening in the city street,  
The glare and noise of the long day are over,  
Over the toil, the breathless stifling heat,  
And from afar the night-wind like a lover  
Touches her cheek and to the park invites her;  
She hastens down the evil-smelling stair,  
Though heat from the hot pavement sharply  
    smites her,  
And from the long day's standing her feet ache.  
With shabby hat in hand to seek relief  
She hurries onward. . . . Screeching motors  
    break  
Night's quiet with their jarring notes. Belief  
Is dead in her, at least she mourns it dead,  
In all that makes life beautiful and fair:  
Yet when a child what dreams were in her head  
Of untold beauty! She is half aware  
Of jostling crowd and trifling obscene talk  
That wounds her ears and makes her hot cheek  
    burn;

## THE JAR OF DREAMS

She dares not run, but breaks to a quick walk  
In search of solitude. Heart, body yearn  
For quiet and for peace; far, far away  
From all the unconscious suffering she has  
known

When listless yet alert, at her machine,  
She heard, unhearing, the unmeaning chatter  
Of girls and men around her, scarcely seen,  
Like shadowy ghosts, moving through dust and  
clatter.

“Blest be the night,” she mused, “for night is  
cool

And clean and calm beneath the gentle stars  
That shine through trees and bathe in the clear  
pool

In this far corner, where no footstep mars  
The quiet dewy grass beneath my feet;  
If I were only underneath the sod,  
Covered with growing things that smell so  
sweet,

I’d fear no devil nor doubt the love of God!”

## THE CHAR-WOMAN

SHE cringed if you but spoke to her,  
To hard words she was used,  
A creature of dull silences,  
Or speech all self-confused.

You passed her in the corridor,  
She seemed a wavering blur  
Upon your sight. You never thought  
How you might seem to her.

You, who love natures intricate,  
And study not a few,  
Might study her a century  
And still she'd puzzle you!

But you will never think of her  
As she scrubs clean your floor!  
A shadow in the corner were  
As much to you, and more.

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

She is to you but as the tongs  
    With which she mends your fire,  
And never have you asked yourself  
    Had she known heart's desire.

Her dingy clothes seem part of her  
    As coal heaped in the hod  
Which her lean arm lugs up the stair —  
    Is she unknown to God?

## A LOVER

WHAT have you done to me that I should go  
    Unseeing and alone among the sons of men,  
While they like ghosts around me to and fro  
    Flit, dim neglected shadows, quite outside  
    my ken?  
    What have you done?

What have you done to me that when they talk  
    And smile, and slip a hand through my re-  
    luctant arm,  
I feel remote, though side by side we walk,  
    And long to escape the town with all its  
    human swarm?  
    What have you done?

What have you done to me that I must tear  
    And wrench myself apart from all that  
    once I loved,  
Wandering through wintry fields snow-patched  
    and bare,

*THE JAR OF DREAMS*

Since even from friendly eyes I would be  
far removed?

What have you done?

What have you done to me that I should seek  
Bare woods that stretch black branches to  
the sullen sky,

As if in supplication they would speak  
My heart's wild eager questioning of how  
and why?

What have you done?

What have you done to me vast as the night,  
Obliterating all with its dark wings out-  
spread,

And shutting out the last faint edge of light,  
Where lowering skies enshroud a world  
grown cold and dead?

What have you done?



## A FRIEND

IN what dark corners of the human mind  
Does terror lurk, and formless misery,  
Such as I fear to face and look upon  
And drag out to the staring light of day?  
Now when veiled Horror crouches at my back  
And all my questioning heart trembling recoils,  
One hand I seek to draw me towards the light,  
'T is yours, 't is yours.

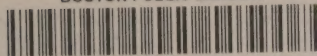
I ask not if you love me; all I know  
Is that I'm frightened, cold and comfortless,  
And, prosperous friends of other days forgot,  
I turn to you, who have known pain and fear  
And failure and despair, and in your eyes  
I read companionship; and though your cloak  
Be threadbare, half of it is mine,  
You are my friend.







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